

A SAD CONFESSION
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A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“We hid as it were our faces from him.”
Isaiah 53:3

YOU will find in the margin of some of your Bibles that this passage is rendered, “He hid, as it were, his face from us.” The literal translation of the Hebrew would be, “He was as a hiding of faces from him,” or “from us.” Some critical readers think these words were intended to describe our Lord as having so humbled Himself, and brought Himself to such a deep degradation, that He was comparable to the leper who covered his face and cried, “Unclean, unclean!” hiding himself from the gaze of men. Abhorred and despised of men, he was like one put aside because of his disease, and shunned by all mankind.

Others suppose the meaning to be that, on account of our Lord’s terrible and protracted sorrow, His face wore an expression so painful and grievous that men could scarcely bear to look upon Him. They hid, as it were, their faces from Him, amazed at that brow all carved with lines of anxious thought, those cheeks all ploughed with furrows of deep care, those eyes all sunk in shades of sadness, that soul bowed down, exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

It may be so, we cannot tell. So let it pass. I have a plain, practical purpose to pursue. Here is an indictment to which we must all plead guilty. Let us make the reflection our own, as we humbly bow at the dear pierced feet of our Lord, and remember how cruelly we slighted our kindest friend, when “We hid, as it were, our faces from him.”

At sundry times and in divers manners we may have done this. Where shall I begin? Alas! I fear me that contempt and contumely alone will interpret some men’s sayings and doings. Their conversation is so profane that their crime becomes palpable.

Sometimes men hide their faces from Jesus—

I. IN COOL CONTEMPT OF HIM.

How astounding! How revolting! He, the Lord of glory, the Creator of heaven and earth, out of compassion to the children of men, condescended to take upon Himself our nature—should we, therefore, slight Him? Being found in fashion as a man, He was subjected to all the pains and miseries of this mortal life, and encountered the horrors of death itself—should we, therefore, revile, or should we not revere Him? He ought surely to be esteemed by all mankind.

I have sometimes felt that had He not redeemed my soul, I must reverence Him for redeeming others. Had I never tasted of His love at all myself, yet the story of His love to His enemies is such that I think I could fall down and worship Him. His character claims our admiration and appeals to the tenderest feelings of our heart. So disinterested was the love of Christ, so self-denying, so unwavering in its constancy, He surpassed every instance on record, and excelled any ideal that the most gifted imagination could paint.

Greater love hath no man than this, that he laid down his life for his friends. There, creature generosity exhausts itself, mere human love has reached its limit. But God commends His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And this blessed man, Christ Jesus, personally shows and makes evident this love to His enemies, His persecutors, His murderers.

Still there are those who can revile His name while they scan His history. We can scarcely speak of Him but forthwith the vials of their wrath begin to distil. Strange is it that a fame so lively, and a name

so altogether lovely should so commonly set a man against his fellows and become the innocent cause of strife and persecution in the world. That name of Jesus—a name of highest heavenly glory, a name of peace profound, a name of universal good will, a name to knit all mankind in one common brotherhood—has become, by the perversity of human nature, a byword and a reproach. Their Savior in every age they have not known, their day of visitation they have not heeded. Hence His name has excited wrath and opposition among the sons of men, where it should have excited reverence and love.

Some show their opposition by attempting to ignore or to tarnish the dignity of His person. These blatant infidels, I trust, are getting fewer and fewer. The rough, bullying speech of Tom Paine we sincerely hope will never be heard on earth again. There are *thinkers* (as they would have us call them) abroad in these days more courteous in their address, and far more cautious in their language, than the disbelievers of former times, but too often they are as full of malignity and deadly venom against the Christ of God as were the coarsest scoffers who uttered their blasphemy before we were born, so persistently is the person of Christ held in contempt alike by Greek and barbarian.

And are there not others who affect great admiration for Jesus of Nazareth as an example of virtue and benevolence, who nevertheless reject His mediatorial work as our Redeemer? As a substitutionary sacrifice they do not and cannot esteem Him. Isaiah, in the chapter before us, was holding up Christ as the Lamb led to the slaughter, the victim of our transgressions, bearing our chastisement. How the anger of some men kindles at this representation of the Gospel! They sneer at the doctrine of substitution, vicarious sacrifice, atonement, at the simple fact, indeed, that, “His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”

That He was a true philanthropist, an admirable teacher and an inspired prophet, they will readily allow, but that our iniquities were laid on Him, that He was punished in our stead, that He died the just for the unjust, they set aside as though it were an idle tale, a baseless fiction. This noblest of all doctrines, the grandest of all conceptions is here brought down to the humblest capacity of the most simple understanding. The learned can find no flaw in the logic.

But learning and logic have little enough to do with it. The heart that believes it, can tell its worth. “*He loved me and gave himself for me.*” Angels have but to hear of it, and they sing of it! Marvel of marvels that there should be men on earth so wise that they hoot at it and count it worthy of nothing but their scorn! They hide, as it were, their faces from the crucified Savior. And then they will pour contempt upon other doctrines of His Gospel.

Not satisfied with opposing the main and cardinal truth, they will hold up other parts of revelation to ridicule. If a man likes to laugh, and wishes to scoff, he can find folly in infinite wisdom. Nay, he can, if he has eyes that are full enough of falsehood, discover faults even in the immaculate God Himself. Given but the desire to deride and parody, the occasions and opportunities will always be plentiful.

And with what pitiful disdain the Lord’s people are slighted! The followers of Christ are, as it is commonly said, poor people, illiterate and uninstructed, and but few of the great ones of the earth, or the learned men, will give in their names as adherents of the Savior! Well, so it always has been. And yet the day shall come when the Lord shall vindicate His own election and prove how infinitely superior it is to man’s reputation. What though He choose the base things of the world and the things that are not, yet by these will He be exalted when His enemies are rolled in the dust.

Do I address anybody who has despised the Lord Jesus Christ? Ah! my friend, little do you consider what you have done. Your wantonness can offer no excuse but your ignorance. And as for your ignorance, it is without excuse. You are unacquainted with our Lord, or you would not decry Him. Bethink yourselves, I pray you. Have you really studied His character? Have you looked into the proofs of His being the Messiah? Have you weighed the evidence of His divinity?

If you have not, surely you should be ashamed of your temerity. Can it be that out of mere prejudice you have condemned unheard One who to us is all our hope, One who has lifted some of us out of despair and given us peace of mind—One who is now so dear to us that we feel we could cheerfully die for Him. Do not affront Him. Do not disparage His claim upon our tender regard. Do not speak ill of His

blessed name. He is a friend to some of us, the like of whom we never elsewhere found. Were it not wiser and fitter every way that you should listen to our testimony and go to Him, and see whether He cannot and whether He will not save you, and make you partakers of our joy? If He rejects you, or if you find Him false to His promises, then speak against Him, but we beseech you, do not begin to rail before you have any reason.

He that builds upon this stone builds securely, but alas! for the man that falls foul of this stone! it will assuredly grind him to powder. As surely as Christ is God, those that oppose Him will one day wonder and perish. The peril is looming as the day is coming. The glorious apocalypse for which saints look will bring about a total eclipse of everyone that is proud and lofty, everything that is high and lifted up. I will not linger on so dreadful a lookout, but I earnestly admonish you to lay it to heart.

A second and far more common way in which men hide their faces from Christ is—

II. BY THEIR HEEDLESSNESS, THEIR INDIFFERENCE, THEIR NEGLECT.

Alas! all of us are guilty, or have been guilty, in this respect. Allow me to ask you, my beloved friends in Christ, to look back a little while to the period before your conversion. Was not Jesus as worthy of your love then as He is now, as glorious, as admirable? And yet for how long a time had you hid your face from Him! Surely you must remember the days gone by when you did not care even to hear about Him. Any kind of amusement was more fascinating for you than discourse or converse concerning your Savior and your King.

There is music in His name now, it was dull enough to you once. You heard sermons without heeding them. Perhaps some of you were constrained by force of circumstance to attend the sanctuary, though no part of the service was attuned to your taste. You mixed with the multitude, but you did not see or draw near the Master. They were dreary hours, you were glad when they were spent, and you were liberated. You listened, but what came in at one ear went out at the other. Scarcely that, for you did not allow it to go far enough into your brain for that.

Listlessly you listened, with no desire to learn anything about that Christ who is your only true Savior, your only rightful Sovereign. If you had been in the market, and someone had been describing the prices of goods, telling you of the probabilities of a rise or fall, you would have been all attention, and you would have no difficulty in carrying home the bulk of what you had heard, especially that part which was about your own business.

But oh! in those days Christ was nothing to you. The preacher might lift Him up with all his might and tell you with tears that if you rejected Him, you must perish. You took no heed. You did not care whether you perished or not. You did not give Christ your thought. He was put before you, but you hid, as it were, your faces from Him.

Although the Bible was in your house, bearing witness to Jesus Christ, you never searched it. You may have taken the Book down sometimes and read a chapter here, or picked out a verse there, and congratulated yourself not a little upon your good deed, but as to searching the Scriptures through, and comparing passage with passage, spiritual things with spiritual, that you might know Jesus Christ, who is hidden there like a pearl in the field—oh! no, you did not care to give any diligence in this matter.

Why, some of you young men were studying hard years ago. You rose up early and sat up late over books professional and profound, and truly if you were to be proficient in your secular calling, you had need to do so, but all that while you never sat up an hour later than usual to make a search concerning your soul and the Lord who bought it with His blood, neither did you ever rise from your soft couch at daylight on purpose that you might bow the knee and seek your Lord and worship Him.

No, everything was sought except the Savior, every duty you would scrupulously fulfill except that which you owed your Lord, all the world was fair except the Altogether Lovely. And perhaps, at that very time there were pursuits that gratified you utterly unworthy of your preference. You had loves which have proved bitterness to you, things that fascinated your heart that did but degrade you. He was your best friend, He who only meant you good, He who elevates the man that does but look to Him, He

whose very name fills the soul with refreshment, He, the love of whose person is heaven begun—He was all this while cast into the background.

I am not speaking of you, my friends, as if you had a monopoly of reproach, I do speak of myself with many deep regrets of heart. I hid, as it were, my face from Him, and I let the years run round—not without twitches of conscience, not without rebukes, when I knew how much I did need a Savior, not without the warnings which came from others, whom I saw happy and rejoicing in Christ, while I had no share in His salvation.

Still I put it off, as perhaps some of you are doing, from day to day, and month to month, and thought that Christ might come in some odd hour, and when I had nothing else to do I might think of Him, whose blood could cleanse me. O my soul, I could fain smite you now!

I have heard of a minister who preached for several years before he was converted, and when converted he became a very earnest preacher of the Gospel, but one day as he rode along the street, he was observed to stop and cane a dog which was lying in front of a door. When they said to him, “Mr. McPhayle, why did you beat the dog?” He said, “He was so exactly like myself, lying in the sun sleeping—a dumb dog that didn’t bark—that I could not but give him a touch of the rod, though I meant it all the while for myself.”

Truly I could lay this rod about my own heart to think that weeks and weeks should have rolled over my head, and I should have hid, as it were, my face from Christ in willful neglect of my dear Lord, whose heart has bled for me. Does not this come home to anybody here? Are there not some who might justly chastise themselves?

But we pass on to a third form of this same folly. We hid, as it were, our faces from Him, many of us—

III. BY PREFERRING ANY OTHER MODE OF SALVATION TO SALVATION BY FAITH IN CHRIST.

The great Gospel fact is that whoever looks to Christ is saved. The moment faith, with her intelligent eyes, beholds Christ on the cross, and depends on Him, the man that exercises that faith is forgiven, rescued, saved. Now when we were aroused to something like anxiety about our souls, we were told this. Some of us were told it very plainly, others perhaps not quite so clearly, but we did not like this way of being saved, simply by believing. Did not we try to merit salvation by our own good works? Oh! we would do this, and that, and the other, we would correct ourselves in this department, and we would push on and make progress in the other, and we tried to do so.

Oh! I could pour scorn upon myself to think of some of the good resolutions I made! I blew them up like children with their pipes and their soap. Fine bubbles they were, reflecting all the colors of the rainbow. But a touch and they dissolved. They were good for nothing—poor stuff to build eternal hopes upon. Oh! that working of ours! What slavery it was, but what small results it produced! We came to grief whenever we began to get a little comfortable with ourselves. Just when we said, “Now my tower will stand,” there came an earthquake and it all went to a heap of ruins.

Then, if we remember well, we tried our feelings, we said, “It cannot be that if I believe in Jesus just as I am, I shall be saved, I must feel something.” How we resorted to sharp books, terrible sketches of death, and judgment, and perdition—I know I did. Baxter’s *Call to the Unconverted* cut me to the quick and harrowed up my gloomiest apprehensions. We expected to feel something indescribable, and when we began to feel a little alarm and distress of mind we found it was not the thing that brought satisfaction to the mind, or peace to the heart, for the more we did feel, the less we thought we felt, and the more we felt, the less we considered our feelings to be of the right kind.

So, after tossing, and toiling, and rowing with feelings, we found we had got no farther than we did with works. And all this while there stood the Savior with this simple counsel, “Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth.”

Still we wrapped ourselves in our mantle and hid, as it were, our faces from Him. We kept looking at ourselves and inquiring in the biographies of good men after this feeling and after the other, while we

hid, as it were, our faces from Him. And when we were beaten off from that false refuge, we took to a fresh conceit. Thinking we could pray ourselves into heaven, we began to pray. This would have been quite right had not we put the exercise of prayer before the commandment to believe. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”—that is the Gospel. We were so reluctant to surrender ourselves to an implicit confidence in our Lord. We resolved to pray. Prayer seemed to us a proper performance, a religious duty acceptable to God and much to be commended. We did not understand that we must need be quickened into life before we could breathe freely.

Looking upon daily prayer as a kind of ecclesiastical exercise, albeit there was no real heart in it, we thought some good would come of making it a habit. But no good did come. Our prayers became a form, and we disquieted ourselves in vain. We found we could not pray. Oh! what fools we were! What fools all of us are to look anywhere for salvation but to Jesus Christ!

God the Father has set forth Christ to be a propitiation for sin. If God has done that, cannot I be contented? If the Lord has accepted Christ instead of me, and promised that if I believe in Jesus I shall be saved, why need I gad about to find some other way of peace, pardon, and full salvation? Is not God’s way good enough for me? If God accepts it, why should not I rejoice in it?

Oh! dear friends, if we have been covering our faces, let us uncover them right now, and if they are black as soot with sin, let us just look up to the cross with a black face, and say, “Savior of sinners, I, the very chief among them, put my sole trust in Thee! Hiding my eyes no more from the light, I will look to You and trust You with all my heart.”

In yet another way we hid our faces from Him. After we were quite sure that we could not be saved other than by the one Mediator, do you remember how we continued to hide our face from Jesus—

IV. BY PERSISTENT UNBELIEF IN HIM?

I know it for myself. I held up the handkerchief before my eyes, saturated with my own tears. This sympathy for our sorrows I could not credit. It is the sullen sulk of sad souls. Their distress of mind has come between them and the Redeemer. Strange to tell, some men will reason against themselves. No doubt if there were a gift to be bestowed upon all the poor people in the parish, everybody who wanted anything would try to prove himself to be in the parish. If there were a man who lived with half his house in one parish and half in another, I’ll be bound to say he would try to prove he lived in the parish where the gifts were to be had, but somehow or other awakened sinners try to prove that they are not the sort of people Christ died for.

They used to have in Rome when they were canonizing saints an *Advocatus Diaboli*, or advocate of the devil, who used to plead against the person being canonized, and offer all the objections he could. It seems strange that so many people should turn *Advocatus Diaboli* against themselves.

I can tell you how they argue, for I have talked with them by the hour, and this has been the fashion of their counterpleading, “But sir, I don’t feel my need of it.” We reply, “If you cannot go to Christ with a broken heart, go to Christ for a broken heart.” “Oh! but sir, I don’t feel that I am fit to go.” “Your unfitness is the only evidence He wants.” “But I don’t think I have repented enough.” “Granted, and you never will repent enough, could your tears flow forever. You cannot be saved by the merit of your repentance. Jesus Christ will forgive your impenitence as well as your other sins. Certainly if you want more repentance, you must go to Him for it.”

“Well, but sir, do you know I cannot help fearing that perhaps I am not one of the elect?” We have replied, “Perhaps you are, and anyhow you had better go to Christ, because He has given an invitation to every creature, He says, ‘Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.’”

“Ah! sir, but you don’t know—I am so indifferent.” “Well, but never will you be otherwise than indifferent as long as you stay away from the Savior. If you go to Him and put your trust in Him, He will remove your indifference. He alone can roll away this stone from the door of your heart.” One moment they will say they do not feel, and almost in the same breath they will turn round and say they feel the horrors of despair. When they tell you of the dreadful blasphemies that come into their mind, you may

answer that it is written, “All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, and whosoever believeth in him is not condemned,” feel or not feel as he may.

Well, I have pursued that business till I have been pretty nearly tired of it, when all of a sudden the person I have been trying to comfort has begun again where he commenced, as if he had never said those things before, he has gone over the same round of objections, and I have, no doubt would have continued to repeat himself, had I continued to answer him fifty times over, and so did he encourage the morbid apprehension that he should not himself be saved.

You see a man put into the condemned cell at Newgate, and you go in and tell him that Her Majesty presents him with a free pardon. I warrant you he will not put his hand to his brow and say, “Well, but I think there is this or that objection to my accepting it.” “No,” he thinks, “if there is any objection, let those find it out that like, it is no business of mine.”

And so with the soul that is bidden to come to Christ, I say, let it come, objections or no objections, and if there be objections, let somebody else find them out, but as for you, poor sinner, don’t cover your face from Jesus, but come as you are, just as you are, and say, “Here I am, my Savior, if You can, save—and I believe You can—save me. At any rate, if I perish, I will perish trusting in You.” Rather, sinner, shall heaven and earth pass away than even a soul perish that acts on this firm resolve. Hide not your eyes from the Savior, it is a dreadful temptation of Satan, this mistaken notion of humility.

People think, or affect to think, that it would be arrogant or presumptuous on their part to believe in Jesus. I tell you solemnly that unbelief is not humility, it is a foul conceit. Humility trusts the Savior. Base indeed the ingratitude which casts a slur upon His truthfulness, and refrains from venturing to accept His promises.

Oh! brethren, we once hid, as it were, our faces from Him, let us pray for others who are hiding their faces, and beseech the Lord to incline them to turn their faces right round to His dear cross, and then let us gently take off the mantle that obscures their vision, and say to them, “Look, look through your tears! Look even now, for there is life in a look at the Crucified One.”

But not to tarry, I am afraid there are some of us who must plead guilty to another charge, we have hidden, as it were, our faces from Him since He has saved us, and since we have known His love—

V. BY OUR SILLY SHAME AND OUR BASE COWARDICE.

Perhaps I speak to some Christians here, who, though they love the Lord, have never professed His name. Dear brother, dear sister, do you think this is right—is it loyal? Had He kept His love to you a secret, and never openly espoused your cause, and given up Himself for your salvation, where would you now have been? Howbeit He boldly declared He was not ashamed to call us “brethren,” and true to His word, He acted a brother’s part, and carried through the work of our redemption. Since Jesus Christ was not ashamed of us, surely we need never be ashamed of Him.

“But I think I may go to heaven by myself,” said one, “for I am afraid I shall compromise other people if I dishonor Christ.” And do you not think, my dear brother, that you are dishonoring Him by such a suggestion? “Oh! but suppose I were to fall into sin?” Nay, do not you think that even now you are living in sin while you are refusing what He demands, that you should confess Him before men? His promise is that he that with his heart believes, and with his mouth makes the good confession, shall be saved. Or as it is put in another form, we read, “He that believeth and is baptized” (which is the open confession of Him) “shall be saved.”

Do not, I entreat you, play the coward. “Suppose I should fall,” say you, “after I have made a profession?” Which do you think the safer place, where your Lord bids you, or where you choose to be yourself? Come forward if you are His followers and put on His regimentals. I wonder what our Government would say if Her Majesty’s soldiers were to take off their red coats and protest, “We should be just as good soldiers, and as true, without this uniform as with it.” They would be suspected of treason, they would be taken up as deserters. And are there no deserters here? I should like to send the officer round and find you out—

*“Are you the soldiers of the cross,
The followers of the Lamb;
How can you blush to own His cause,
Or fear to speak His name?”*

Come out, brethren, come out. If you want your Master’s blessing, come and join your Master’s servants. Aye, but some of us who have made a profession of our faith may, nevertheless, have sometimes hid our faces from Christ—

VI. BY COWARDICE.

Have you never been in company where religion was jested at, and felt, “Well, I had better hold my tongue here”? There are seasons when that is prudent, and even proper—when you are so weak a champion that you might damage the cause. At the same time, even the weakest champion had better have his lance broken than be altogether a coward. How often might we have spoken for Jesus, when nothing has kept us back except cowardice! It was not prudence, it was cowardice, downright cowardice. We thought they would give us an ill name, and so we dishonored Christ lest we should encounter a rude joke or a coarse jest from a person whose opinion was never worthy of a moment’s thought.

I wish there were more boldness for Christ everywhere. In the higher circles he that confesses Christ may have to run the gauntlet for it, but let him do so boldly. And among working men in the shop or factory there is a deal of “chaffing” goes on, often of a cruel kind, against the Christian, but he who is such a feather-bed soldier that he cannot bear the reproach is not worthy of such a Lord.

Our sires were not so tame that they could be intimidated with a taunt. Their cheek never blenched at the stake, or in the fire! They were ready to die for the Lord Jesus. What think you, then? Should we play the craven, shall a little maid make us afraid, or shall some silly fools, who scoff at all that is holy, drive us to disown our Savior?

Oh! brethren, do not surrender your souls so cheaply. Never mind their sneers. Never hide your face from Him. Come out and have no fellowship with the profane, the profligate, or the persecutors. Is Christ in the pillory? Put me in with Him, and then throw what you like at me. Is Christ’s name rolled in the mire, and made a byword and a proverb? Link my name with His and make a byword and a proverb of it. Twist the two together and let us be the object of your slanders. I will glory in it. The reproach of Christ is greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Hide not then your faces from Him, beloved, nor shrink from espousing His cause.

I feel sure that many, if not all of us, who are believers will penitently confess that we have sometimes hidden our faces from Christ—

VII. BY NOT WALKING IN CONSTANT FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM.

I once asked a brother how long it was since he had enjoyed fellowship with Jesus. His reply was remarkable. “I feel sorry,” said he, “you have asked me that question, and yet I must thank you. Had you asked me whether I continued in prayer, I would have said, ‘Yes,’ for with more or less fervor, I do constantly pray. Had you inquired whether I endeavored to walk honestly and uprightly before my fellow creatures, I should have said, ‘Yes, thank God, I hope I have not slipped with my feet,’ but when you say, ‘How long is it since you really have had fellowship with Jesus?’ I blush to own that many a day has passed since I have known this high privilege.”

Is that so with you, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ? If so, it is very, very sad. Our heart, if we are Christians, is married to Christ. Say, then, would it not be strange if a wife should live with her husband and hide her face from him by the week and month together, should there be scarcely a comfortable word between them, should there only be just the decent civilities of a daily routine, without much concern or any confiding?

Yet perhaps some of you pray a little every morning and every night because you think it is proper. At special times you do your reverence to Christ, and anon you go out into the world, and there, in a measure, you estrange yourselves from Him, and then you return home, far from being eager and

anxious for communion with your Lord, so, not seeking His face for yourselves, you do in effect hide your face from Him. There is no face to face fellowship.

Remember, I entreat you, that His love to you is constant, although your love to Christ may grow cold. If you can dispense with His company, He delights in your company. There it stands in the Canticles, “Let me see thy face; let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.”

Now had you said that to Christ, it might be easily understood, but when He says that to you, it is most admirable. His love makes Him desire to hold fellowship with you—will you refuse it, will you deny Him? Surely you will say, “Do You think so much of me? I ought to have said to You what You have said to me, ‘Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, with one look of thine eyes, and one chain of thy neck.’”

Nay, but these are the words of Him from whom I have so often hid my face. And is this precious Christ so enamored of me? Has He, the Prince of Life, so fixed His affections on my spirit? Does He love to hear me speak with Him, does He delight in my communing with Him? Oh! then I cannot forbear, I must cry, ‘Come to me, my Lord, and I will tell You my griefs, and my joys, and You shall tell me all Your heart, and we will thus confer and confide with secrets of which the world wots not!’”

The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. Let us, therefore, tell our heart’s love to Christ. *We hid, as it were, our faces from Him.* Say, when and how did you begin thus to act? You used to revel in the light of His countenance once, why did you hide your face? Did you get worldly? Did you dote too much upon some earthly object? Did you neglect prayer? Did you give way to temptation?

Beloved, whatever may have been the cause, remember Jesus Christ has not divorced you. He has said, “Return, ye backsliding children; I am married unto you, saith the LORD.” Come back then, come back now, as we meet around the Lord’s table, you that love your Lord, but have lost fellowship with Him, pray—pray that this may be the beginning of a happier era.

Oh! that we might keep looking on to Jesus, and Jesus looking to us! Oh! that we might maintain that dear fellowship, and never have it broken till it shall melt into the yet nearer and more glorious communion on the other side of the river, where nothing can disturb the profound enjoyment! Get you up, get you up, believers, from your sorrows, from your cares, from your anxieties and distractions, get you up to the Master’s feet, and sit there with Mary, and look up into His dear loving face, and listen to His gracious words of promise, hide not your face from Him, He will not hide His face from you.

Say, like the spouse in the Canticles, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for his love is better than wine,” and He will answer your prayer, and make your heart burn within you with the holy ecstasy of fervent love. May it be so ever with us! Amen.

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